

## **AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING MINUTES**

### **March 15, 2007**

**Members Present:** Daniel Clapp, Doris Holden, Rosemary Kofler, Tom McAuley Barbara Sutherland, David Yaukey

**Absent:** Elsie Fetterman, Ed Kaler, Susan Whitbourne

**Select Board Liaison:** absent

**Staff Present:** Nancy Pagano (Director/Program Director), Maura Plante (Assistant Director/Services), Karen Erman (Administrative Assistant), Marlene Barnett (Program Coordinator)

**Guests:** Marge Babb, Susan Donner, Allan Hanson

#### **Welcome:**

Barbara Sutherland, Chair, called the Council on Aging meeting to order at 9:05 AM. Nancy introduced our guests. Susan Donner is a Professor in the School of Social Work and Associate Dean at Smith College. Allan Hanson is a Professor at UMass.

#### **Minutes of February Meeting:**

Rosemary, David and Dan corrected the minutes of the February 8, 2007 meeting. They were approved and accepted as corrected.

#### **Senior Trust Treasurer's Report:**

Doris distributed copies of the report. The total donated into the Grace Thayer Memorial Fund is \$255.00. The family has been informed. Acknowledgements were sent. There is no new financial report this month because of minimal activity. The Treasurer's report was approved and accepted.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Smith College/UMass Technology and Empowerment Study:**

**Susan Donner** spoke about a three year NSF Grant awarded to the Smith College School for Social Work and the UMass Computer Science Center. The goal is to provide research on the use of technology to help people age in place. The technology would help people to be more richly connected with family and medical providers. The project would begin at Bangs before being implemented in people's homes. It would begin with 15-25 volunteers using our computer room for a period of 18 months. The volunteers would be paid incrementally up to \$175.00. They would be trained and counseled by graduate students and the research team. Data would be collected before, during and after the project. The Smith College School of Social Work would like to develop an on-going relationship with the COA of Amherst.

**Allan Hanson** explained that this would be a multiyear project. Eventually the technology would be installed in people's homes to help them maintain communication with friends and family. It is designed for independent living. A few examples of what it would provide in the home are: a visual phone connection with 3 people of choice, a system to build daily schedules, a fall detector, and ways of contacting someone in the event of a fall.

The researchers are looking at people's attitudes about technology. Participants will need a computer with a hi-speed Internet connection and a video phone. The family members they choose to have communication with will also need a computer and video phone.

Nancy said that the IT Director in Town approves this project. She asked for an endorsement from the COA. A motion was made and seconded. The COA unanimously approved the NSF research project to begin at Bangs. It is expected to begin mid-end of April.

#### **Nursing Center Update:**

**Nancy** reminded us of the incident of a heart attack at the Center and the need for reviewing emergency protocols and the role of the nurse. It was decided that the Nursing Center would be returned to the Senior Center for supervision, since the mandate of the Health Department is not direct nursing care. Their role is more broad-based public health issues for the entire Town. Nancy is working with the Senior Health Advisory Group to redesign the nursing center and develop goals, including outreach. Nancy wanted confirmation from the COA that they fully support the Nursing

Center. A motion was made and seconded. The COA unanimously approved to support the supervision of the Nursing Center by the Senior Center.

#### **Boston Post Cane:**

**Nancy** informed us that Ken Padelford, the most recent holder of the cane, died at the age of 104. Nancy researched the records and learned that the oldest living person in Amherst, who has been a resident of Amherst for 10 or more years, is a woman who lives at Clark House. She is now 101. Nancy contacted her and learned that she is a very private person. She wants to remain anonymous, does not want publicity, and does not want to disclose her age to others. Nancy fully respects that. She will take her a spaghetti dinner (the woman's favorite meal) when she presents her with the cane.

Nancy would like to have a display case built and put the cane on display with the names of the recipients listed. We do not have money for that at this time.

### **CONTINUING BUSINESS**

#### **Friends:**

**Nancy** said that Susan and Dan volunteered to help her finish the documentation to complete the process of establishing the Friends Group. Deb Jankowski will look over the forms and Nancy will bring them back to the COA.

#### **ITN – Independent Transportation Network**

**Nancy** reported that she, David and Maura went to a meeting in Springfield about ITN. Nancy wants to clarify the COA level of support for ITN. Do we want to be a co-sponsor of the project? David explained that it is easy to defend the goal of improving transportation for seniors. His concerns are that it appeals to a middle-class, suburban population and does not focus on those with limited finances. He also said there is a lack of clarity about what (fiscal) 'sustainability' really means. Will it be perpetually self-sustaining since it depends to a large extent on outside contributions? After a brief discussion, the COA decided that members could continue to attend ITN meetings but that the COA would not be listed as a sponsor.

### **SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE**

#### **Comprehensive Planning Committee:**

**Rosemary** reported that the CPC and the Work Groups have been meeting frequently. The seven Work Groups have completed the process of developing goals and objectives. On March 29 these will be presented to the community at large (Community Choices). If the community agrees that the goals and objectives are what they had in mind for the future development of Amherst, the Work Groups will then proceed to develop strategies, or ways of implementing the objectives. A survey is also being developed. It will be mailed out to residents at random and they will select the degree (on a scale of 1-5) to which they would like major objectives implemented.

#### **Highland Valley Elder Services:**

**Barbara** reported that John Lutz and the cook at HVES presented the last meeting. They talked about the nutritional value of the food being prepared, changes in products used, how it is subsidized and the extent to which they use local produce.

**Nancy** spoke about the problem with delivering meals in Pelham. The routes are quite distant and the cost of gas is becoming a problem. Also, with an increase in needs, some routes are becoming too long - 24 people on one route, for instance. Volunteers get paid \$0.35/mile. The Senior Center gets \$0.91/meal to administer the nutrition program. The expenses for Ferne and gas mileage must come out of the \$0.91. Nancy contacted the Chair of the Pelham COA, Joan Hart to see if she could help find a Pelham volunteers for the delivery of meals. Joan was not very encouraging and she said in fact that it was difficult to find people to serve on the Pelham COA. Nancy does not want to abandon the needy seniors in Pelham, nor create undue burden and stress for Ferne trying to find a fifth driver daily. HVES has also been alerted of the problem.

**Doris** suggested having the Amherst Senior Center deliver the Pelham meals to the Pelham Fire Station and have a Pelham volunteer deliver them to the homes from there.

### **COA STAFF REPORTS**

#### **Counseling Center Update:**

**Maura** reported that there are two PhD students at the center. A licensed, independent Clinical Social Worker who can take Medicare payments will be hired. That person will work 2-3 hours under the grant and see other elders as well, billing them privately. Under the grant an elder is entitled to six free sessions. If more sessions are needed, the counselor will assist that elder in finding another therapist at his or her own expense.

#### **View Budget Power Point:**

**Nancy** passed out a copy of the Power Point that she and Maura prepared for presentation to the Finance Committee. She said it was well received and the committee was very attentive.

The COA meeting was adjourned at 10:25 AM.

**The next meeting will be held on April 12, 2007 at 9:00 AM.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Rosemary Kofler, Secretary